



# HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

2 STATE HOUSE STATION  
AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333-0002

(207) 287-1400

TTY: MAINE RELAY 711

## **Michael F. Brennan**

49 Wellington Rd.

Portland, ME 04103

Phone: (207) 939-6462

[michael.brennan@legislature.maine.gov](mailto:michael.brennan@legislature.maine.gov)

## Testimony of Representative Michael Brennan introducing LD 910 "An Act To Amend the General Assistance Laws Governing Reimbursement" April 1, 2021

Good afternoon Senator Claxton, Representative Meyer, and members of the Health and Human Services Committee. I am Michael Brennan, and I represent District 36 which is part of the City of Portland. I am here today to present LD 910, An Act To Amend the General Assistance Laws Governing Reimbursement."

This bill would restore the 90 percent reimbursement rate for municipalities whose general assistance payments exceed .003 percent of that municipality's total valuation. The 90 percent reimbursement rate had been endorsed by the Legislature over two and a half decades ago in recognition that larger cities such as Bangor, Lewiston, and Portland provided greater levels of general assistance services for Maine citizens due to their role as regional service centers.

Implicitly, the state has relied on these communities to offer a broad range of shelter and food services at a significant savings to the state but at a disproportionate cost to a selected number of municipalities. For example, the City of Portland operates a homeless shelter with a capacity of approximately 150 beds. Prior to the pandemic, those beds were routinely filled every night forcing the City to open and operate an "over flow" shelter for as many as 100 additional persons. However, the majority of persons staying at the shelter were not Portland residents.

I support the City's efforts to provide housing for persons who are homeless. However, it is unfair for taxpayers in Portland, Bangor, Lewiston, and other municipalities to shoulder these additional costs for housing and food.

That is why I am asking you to support this bill and restore the General Assistance Program to its previous level of reimbursement.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to working with you on this bill.